

February 1, 2021

Honorable, David P. Hinkins  
Senate Chair  
Natural Resources, Agriculture,  
& Environmental Quality Appropriations  
Subcommittee

Honorable, Stewart E. Barlow  
House Chair  
Natural Resources, Agriculture,  
& Environmental Quality  
Appropriations Subcommittee

Dear Senator Hinkins and Representative Barlow,

Re: Support for Request for a one-time non-lapsing appropriation – Great Salt Lake Groundwater Studies

Bear River Canal Company (BRCC), through its Board of Directors, expresses its support for the one-time appropriation request for Great Salt Lake Groundwater Studies.

BRCC is a non-profit mutual water company irrigating over 65,000 acres of land in Box Elder County, Utah and producing an estimated 60+ million in crops annually. Our shareholders include many different governmental institutions, corporations, waterfowl management areas and over 2,000 shareholding families. Using 126 miles of canals and a 900 cfs water right, we service the Bear River Delta stretching from Cutler Dam to the Great Salt Lake an area roughly 30 miles long and 15 miles wide.

Because BRCC's canals, water delivery operations, and lands we service have an important nexus to Great Salt Lake, and we recognize that balancing water flows and needs to avoid potential future adverse conditions at Great Salt Lake is in all of our interests. Therefore, we fully support efforts to increase the understanding of the relationships of groundwater and agricultural return flows that interact with the lake and its wetlands. Such information, particularly combined with the broader proposal to create a transient groundwater model for Great Salt Lake through downscaling the Great Basin Carbon and Alluvial Aquifer System (GBCAAS) as described in the Great Salt Lake Groundwater Studies Request for Appropriation, can provide the data and analyses needed to inform water planning and improve water management.

Efforts described in the proposal to update and modify the USGS groundwater model for the Malad River-Lower Bear River area, to a transient model to investigate potential proposed scenarios that include hydrology changes due to conversion of agricultural land to urban uses, will be particularly useful for activities the BRCC and its shareholders as they upgrade and modernize the system.

We fully support and hope to see adequate funding provided by the State of Utah, to improve the science and data needed to support water management decisions, including groundwater flows and interactions with Great Salt Lake and its wetlands.

Sincerely,



Trevor Nielson, General Manager, Bear River Canal Company

cc: Members of the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee

Representative Timothy D. Hawkes